

## **12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH & SPIRITUALITY CONFERENCE**

### **By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, Public Information Officer II**

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) presented its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Conference on Mental Health & Spirituality, entitled *The Breakthrough*, on Thursday, June 6, 2013. It was held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles in downtown. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), the conference was open to everyone from all faiths and ethnicities.

The morning keynote speakers were LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, D.S.W., and the Department of Public Health's (DPH) Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Division (SAPC) Director John Viernes, Jr. During *Visions on Integration of Mental Health & Substance Abuse*, they spoke about the collaboration between LACDMH and SAPC and how healthcare reform will impact this integration.

Partnering LACDMH and DPH SAPC with the faith-based community, Dr. Southard feels it will best help county residents as a whole. "We need to work together to help the community," Dr. Southard said. "If we can come together to make change and everyone works together, then everything gets better."

In the afternoon keynote panel, *Faith Traditions as a Resource in Healing from Mental Illness*, Fr. Luke Dysinger, President Designate Jihad Turk and Rabbi David Wolpe shared how their Catholic, Muslim and Jewish faiths enhance a person's recovery from mental illness.

Several people participated in the day-long conference. Tzu Chi Drumming opened the ceremony while Dr. Beverly Crawford, Pastor of Bible Enrichment Fellowship International Church, provided the invocation. The welcome address was given by Msgr. Lorenzo Miranda, Vicar for the Clergy of the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese.

Workshops throughout the day included: *Tibetan Tradition of Meditation: The Shamata Approach*; *The Real You – No Limitations: Christian Science Healing; Transformation vs. Information: 12-Step Spirituality*; *Resiliency Class: An Overview of the Rationale and a Description of a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-Based Curriculum to Enhance Mood and Resiliency Delivered by Non-Licensed Professionals*; *Clergy and Mental Health: Creating Caring Communities to Reduce Violence*; *Role of Islamic Spirituality in Mental Health Treatment*; *Spirituality: An Essential Element in Mental Health Recovery*; *Integrating an Individual's Spirituality into Clinical Work – A Restorative Approach* and *The Mental Well-Being of Undocumented Youth: Effective Services and Solutions*.

The day ended with a benediction from Pastor Edgar Urbina of White Memorial Medical Center.